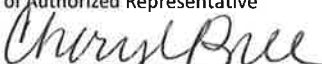


# BROADBAND EXPANSION GRANT APPLICATION

## For Fiscal Year 2022

Primary Applicant (Name and Address):  Tri-County Communications Cooperative, Inc. 417 5 <sup>th</sup> Ave N. PO Box 578 Strum, WI 54770	Applications MUST be UPLOADED to ERF via the Commission's website, <a href="http://psc.wi.gov/apps35/ERF_upload/content/mymenu.aspx">http://psc.wi.gov/apps35/ERF_upload/content/mymenu.aspx</a> . Refer to section 2.3 for detailed instructions.  Applications are due and MUST be uploaded to ERF no later than: <b>March 17, 2022</b> at 4:00pm (16:00) Central Time. <b>Late applications will not be accepted.</b>		
	Contact for further information: <a href="mailto:PSCStatebroadbandoffice@wisconsin.gov">PSCStatebroadbandoffice@wisconsin.gov</a>		
	Date: December 1, 2021		
<p>The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin is seeking applications for Broadband Expansion Grants. The Commission may award one or more grants during Fiscal Year 2022 to public and private entities that meet the eligibility requirements set forth in Wis. Stat. § 196.504. This grant round will be funded with bond proceeds authorized by the Wisconsin Building Commission pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 13.48(30). As such, successful applicants are subject to the requirements of Wis. Stat. § 13.48(30). Successful applicants will demonstrate a clear and achievable plan to improve broadband communications services in one or more underserved areas in the State.</p>			
<p><b>Applicant Certification:</b> In signing this application, the undersigned verifies under penalty of perjury that the Applicant and its employees and agents have not, either directly or indirectly, entered into any agreement or participated in any collusion or otherwise taken any action in restraint of free competition with respect to this application; that no attempt has been made to induce any other person or firm to submit or not to submit an application; that this application has been independently arrived at without collusion with any other proposer, competitor or potential competitor; that this application has not been knowingly disclosed prior to the opening of applications to any other applicant or competitor; that all of the responses and representations of Applicant in this application are true and correct to the best of the undersigned's knowledge, information, and belief; and that Applicant agrees to, accepts, and will comply with all of the terms and conditions respecting this application and any award of a broadband expansion grant as may be established in a grant award Agreement.</p>			
Name of Authorized Representative (Type or Print)  Cheryl Rue	<table style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Title  CEO</td> <td style="width: 50%;">Phone (    )  (715) 695-2691</td> </tr> </table>	Title  CEO	Phone (    )  (715) 695-2691
Title  CEO	Phone (    )  (715) 695-2691		
Signature of Authorized Representative 	Date 3-15-2022		

## SUMMARY OF GRANT APPLICATION

Primary Applicant Name  Tri-County Communications Cooperative, Inc.	Amount of Broadband Grant Request (round to nearest dollar)  \$165,000
Federal Employer Identification No.  39-1024048	Amount of Matching Funds Pledged (round to nearest dollar)  \$165,000
Contact Name and Title  Cheryl Rue, CEO	Total Cost of Proposed Project (round to nearest dollar)  \$330,000
Telephone Number  (715) 695-2691	Project Name  Town of Pleasant Valley FTTH
E-mail Address(es)  <a href="mailto:crue@tccpro.net">crue@tccpro.net</a>	Type of Proposed Broadband Service (FTTH, Cable, DSL, etc.)  FTTH
Grant Manager, if different than Primary Applicant  N/A	Type of Proposed Project (Last-mile, Middle-Mile, backbone, other)  Last mile
Grant Manager Contact Name  N/A	Grant Manager Email Address and Telephone Number  N/A
If the application proposes a public-private partnership, list the names, addresses, and FEINs of the partner companies or organizations Town of Pleasant Valley S10414 County Rd HH Eleva, WI 54738  FEIN 39-6006060	
Brief Project Description (2 sentences) Tri-County Communications Cooperative, Inc. will build a 6-mile FTTH network that will serve 27 Underserved/Unserved locations in the Town of Pleasant Valley in southern Eau Claire County.	
Maximum Proposed Download Transmission Speed  10 Gbps	Maximum Proposed Upload Transmission Speed  10 Gbps
Minimum Proposed Download Speed to Customer Location 100 Mbps	Minimum Proposed Upload Transmission Speed to Customer Location 100 Mbps
County or Counties served by this project Eau Claire County	Community or Communities served by this project Town of Pleasant Valley

List of the broadband service providers, if any, currently serving the area the applicant proposes to serve CenturyLink/Lumen	
Does proposed project serve an <u>unserved</u> area of the State, as defined in <u>Section 1.4</u> of the application instruction? (yes/no)  Yes	Is the Applicant certified as a Broadband Forward! Community or Telecommuter Forward! Community, or does the grant project propose to serve a Broadband Forward! Community or Telecommuter Forward! Community? (yes/no) Broadband Forward! Eau Claire County Telecommuter Forward! Town of Pleasant Valley
For last mile projects or component the expected number of Business Locations that will have access to the improved broadband service (i.e., total business locations passed or with new service access). 2	For last mile projects or components the expected number of Residential Locations that will have access to the improved broadband service (i.e., total residential locations passed or with new service access). 25
Of the improved business locations, how many locations are <u>unserved</u> ? 0	Of the improved residential locations, how many are <u>unserved</u> ? 0
For providers that are eligible telecommunications carriers will the proposed broadband service be available to Lifeline customers? (yes/no) Yes	Are there any programs available for low-income households to access low-cost service or discounts? (yes/no) Yes
Is the internet service provider currently participating in the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program? (yes/no) No Tri-County does participate in the ACP program.	Is the internet service provider currently participating in the Department of Public Instruction and CESA purchasing's Digital Learning Bridge? (yes/no) No
Did the internet service provider participate in the Public Service Commission's voluntary Broadband Coverage Data Collection in 2012? (yes/no) Yes	

## Summary of Project Budget and Funding Statement

### FY22 Broadband Expansion Grant Application Budget & Income Summary



Please complete this form using Microsoft Excel. A PDF copy must be attached to your application as page four. In addition, this form must also be uploaded to ERF in Excel format.

#### Grant Summary

<b>Grant Applicant:</b>	<b>Project:</b>
Tri-County Communications Cooperative, Inc.	Town of Pleasant Valley FTTH

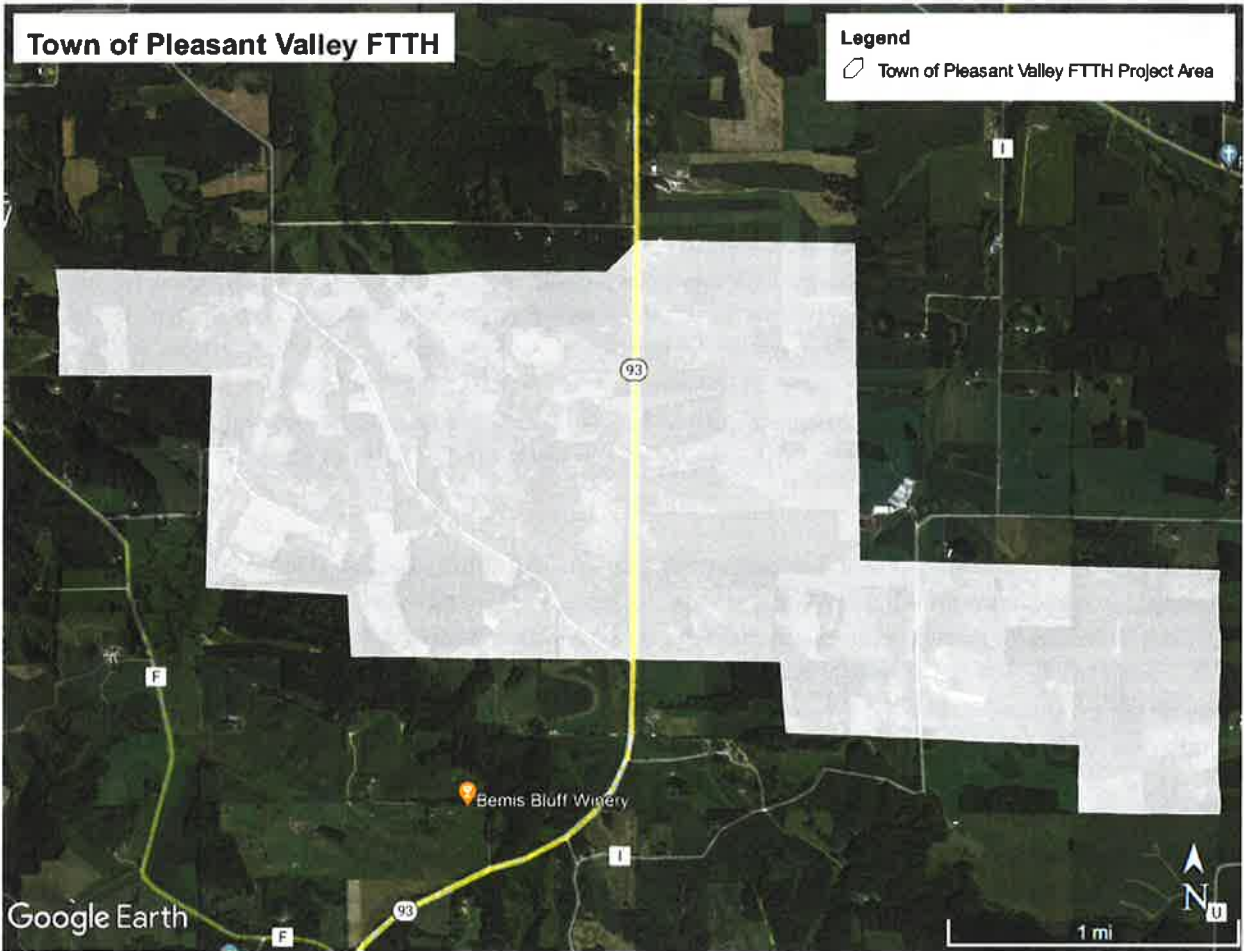
#### Budget

Line:	Description / Category:	Grant Funds:	Match:	Total:
1	Contractual, Consultant Fees	\$ 153,100.00	\$ 153,100.00	\$ 306,200.00
2	Equipment	\$ 4,150.00	\$ 4,150.00	\$ 8,300.00
3	Supplies	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 5,000.00
4	Labor (Salary, Fringe)	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 10,000.00
5	Permitting, Licensing Fees	\$ 250.00	\$ 250.00	\$ 500.00
6	Travel			\$ -
7	Other			\$ -
<b>Total:</b>		<b>\$ 165,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 165,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 330,000.00</b>
				50.0% match requested

#### Pledged Contributions

#:	Entity:	Entity Type:	Pledge Type:	Pledge:
1	Tri-County Communications Cooperative, Inc.	Applicant	Cash	\$ 61,600.00
2	Town of Pleasant Valley	Partner	Cash	\$ 51,700.00
3	Eau Claire County	Other	Cash	\$ 51,700.00
4		Other	Cash	
5		Other	Cash	\$ -
6		Other	Cash	\$ -
7		Other	Cash	\$ -
8		Other	Cash	\$ -
9				
10				
<b>Total:</b>				<b>\$ 165,000.00</b>

Project Map



## **Executive Summary**

Tri-County Communications Cooperative, Inc. ("Tri-County") is applying for a Wisconsin Broadband Expansion Grant ("Grant") to extend its Fiber-To-The-Home ("FTTH") network in the Town of Pleasant Valley ("Town") in Eau Claire County ("Project"). The Project will provide FTTH Broadband to 27 locations in an underserved area. The Town of Pleasant Valley is located in the south central part of Eau Claire County. This Project proposes a FTTH Gigabit Passive Optical Network ("GPON"), with a minimum broadband speed of 100 Mbps symmetrical, to the locations in the Town that have no broadband providers providing reliable broadband speeds of at least 25 Mbps down and 3 Mbps up to 100% of the Project area. The Project will construct a 6-mile fiber network covering 4.4 square mile area in the Town. See page 5 for a detailed map of the Project Area. The estimated construction cost for the Project is \$330,000. The Grant request in this Application is \$165,000 or 50% of the new construction costs. The Town has committed to contribute \$51,700. Eau Claire County has committed to contribute \$51,700 to the cost of construction. The balance of the construction costs of \$61,600 will be paid for by Tri-County.

Tri-County currently provides FTTH to parts of the Town. Tri-County has received many calls from residents in the underserved/unserved area looking for an affordable and reliable option for broadband service. The Project would serve those residents and provide a pathway to service many more homes in this area in the future. The Project area will be costly to construct and the underserved/unserved area may never be served without a Wisconsin Broadband Access Grant. Tri-County is unaware of any plans to provide facility based broadband service to the Project area by any provider by December 31, 2024.

As an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier Tri-County provides discounts to resident customers for broadband service in accordance with Section PSC 160.062 Lifeline Program of the Wisconsin Administrative Code and FCC regulations for Lifeline support. Tri-County works directly with all local school districts to identify students that are not connected to a broadband service, and determine if Tri-County has facilities at that student's home location to be provided at reasonable rates. Tri-County has registered with the Affordable Connectivity Program in an effort to provide broadband services to those that qualify for that program.

If Tri-County were successful in the award of a grant for the Town of Pleasant Valley FTTH Project, construction would start in the summer of 2023. Completion of construction would be projected for late fall of 2023, with installation of customer services through the winter of 2023/2024. Projected completion of the Project would be spring of 2024.

### **3.2 Mandatory application requirements**

#### **3.2.1 Applicant identification and contact information**

- a. **The name and address of the entity applying for the grant, and the mailing address, telephone number and e-mail address of one or more contact persons representing the applicant.**

Name of Entity: Tri-County Communications Cooperative, Inc.

Mailing Address: 417 5th Avenue North

PO Box 578

Strum, Wisconsin 54770

Main Telephone Number: 715-695-2691

Contacts: - Buck Webb, COO – bwebb@tccpro.net

- Cheryl Rue, CEO – crue@tccpro.net

- b. **If the application proposes a public-private partnership, the identity and contact information for all application partners.**

This application propose a public/private partnership agreement with the Town of Pleasant Valley.

Mailing Address: Town of Pleasant Valley  
S10414 County Rd HH  
Eleva, WI 54738  
715-878-4645

Town Clerk Jen Meyer townofpleasantvalley@gmail.com

- c. **The application must show that the applicant is an organization, a telecommunications utility, or a city, village, town, or county that has established a legal partnership or joint venture arrangement with an otherwise qualified organization or telecommunications utility, and as such meets the eligibility requirements set forth in Wis. Stat. § 196.504(1).**

Tri-County Communications Cooperative, Inc is an Incumbent Local Exchange Carrier ("ILEC") certified to provide telecommunications service in the State of Wisconsin pursuant to Section 196.50(2)(b) of the Wisconsin State Statute. Tri-County's PSCW Utility # is 5950 and currently serves the Wisconsin study area #330960.

#### **3.2.2 Description of the project**

- a. **A static map and description of the area of the State that will be affected by the proposed project.**

**The map must be accompanied by:**

- **A URL reference to a spatial file (Geodatabase / Feature Class, or Shapefile or KML) showing the proposed service area. A spatial file including census blocks that intersect the proposed project area is also acceptable.**

The Map on page 5 of the application shows the proposed broadband Project area.

A KML file of the proposed project area has been emailed to [pscbroadbanddata@wisconsin.gov](mailto:pscbroadbanddata@wisconsin.gov)

- b. If the project area lies within a census block designated as served on the PSC Broadband Map, provide additional documentation to demonstrate the actual broadband service that is available in the proposed project area.**

The Project area is designated as underserved or unserved per the PSC Broadband Map

- c. An explanation of how the proposed project will increase broadband access. Include information about the:**

- **Potential and expected number of households served, including number of unserved and underserved locations.**

Potential households in an unserved area are 0. Potential households in the underserved area are 25. Expected households to be served are 20.

- **Potential and expected number of businesses served, including number of unserved and underserved locations.**

Potential businesses in the underserved area are 2. Expected businesses to be served are 2. Potential businesses in the underserved area are 0.

- **Expected number of seasonal residents and tourists served.**

Number of seasonal residents and tourists are unknown.

- **Estimated download and upload speed of the broadband service packages available for purchase.**

Tri-County will provide broadband down/up speeds at a minimum of 100 Mbps/100 Mbps with 10 Gbps available to all locations.

- d. A statement whether the proposed project is targeting the “last mile,” “middle mile,” or backbone portion of the broadband infrastructure.**

The proposed project is targeted as a “last mile”, dedicated broadband infrastructure. Tri-County is currently providing wireline broadband service and has access to adequate



middle mile and backbone Internet access.

- e. **A description of the broadband service to be provided, including estimated download and upload speeds, whether the speed is based on dedicated or shared bandwidth, and the technology that will be used. This description may be illustrated by a map or schematic diagram, as appropriate.**

Tri-County is currently providing dedicated wireline broadband services using a 100% fiber network. Tri-County will provide broadband service using a Fiber-To-The-Home network with Gigabit Passive Optical Network ("GPON") technology. This fiber network will be similar to the fiber network currently in place and used in the current Tri-County service territory. The latest technology will be used to provide the highest quality of service. The Project fiber network will be connected to the existing fiber network and broadband electronics used to provide broadband services in the Tri-County service territory. Available broadband speeds and costs will be as follows.

100 Mbps x 100 Mbps \$49.95

250 Mbps x 250 Mbps \$69.95

500 Mbps x 500 Mbps \$99.95

1 Gbps 1 Gbps \$199.95

- f. **Middle Mile project information – not applicable**
- g. **A schedule by which the applicant intends to complete the components of the proposed project. The project period is up to 24 months.**

If the grant application for the Project is approved in 2022, Tri-County is proposing the following schedule:

August – September, 2022	Order equipment/Staking
May – July, 2023	Bury main line cable
May – October, 2023	Install electronics at customer locations
August – December, 2023	Turn up Service
February 2024	Request final payment of Grant Funds

### **3.2.3 Itemized Budget (all amounts should be rounded to the nearest dollar)**

- a. **In addition to the Summary of Project Budget that is included as page 3, applicants should include a price list or quote for any equipment the applicant intends to purchase, including capital expenditures. The application should also indicate whether any facilities involved would be owned, rented, or leased.**

#### **Project Construction Costs:**

The Town of Pleasant Valley FTTH Project summary of the construction cost for the fiber network. All fiber construction will be provided by a third-party contractor. All of the network will be owned by Tri-County.

<u>Description</u>		<u>Total Cost</u>
<b>Buried Fiber Network</b>		
Mainline fiber material and construction	\$ 214,200	
Drops material and construction	<u>\$ 92,000</u>	\$ 306,200
<b>Electronics and Equipment</b>		
Splitters	\$ 200	
GPON SFP's/CPE Electronics	<u>\$ 8100</u>	\$ 8300
<b>Labor/Engineering/ONT installation</b>	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000
<b>Supplies</b>	\$ 5000	\$ 5000
<b>Highway Permitting</b>	\$ 500	<u>\$ 500</u>
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$330,000</b>

- b. The application must show that the grant, if awarded, will not subsidize the expenses of a telecommunications provider or the monthly bills of telecommunications customers. For purposes of this grant program, subsidize means a contribution to the operating costs, including profit, of the telecommunications provider.

The grant funds requested will not subsidize the expense to provide telecommunications services to end user customers. The grant funds requested in this Application will only be used to help pay for a portion of the fiber network and electronics used to provide broadband. No grant funds will be used for monthly recurring operating costs for broadband or telecommunications services.

- c. The application must show that the grant funds requested will be used for the sole purpose of constructing broadband infrastructure in the underserved areas covered by the application. Construction of broadband infrastructure may include any of the following:
- Project planning that takes place during the performance period.
  - Obtaining construction permits.
  - Construction of facilities, including construction of both "middle mile" and "last mile" infrastructure.
  - Installation and testing of the broadband service.

Grant funds requested will all be used for the sole purpose of constructing broadband infrastructure in the underserved areas in the Town of Pleasant Valley. This includes project planning that takes place during the performance period; obtaining construction permits; construction of the last mile infrastructure; and installation and testing of the broadband service.

### 3.2.4 Priority factors supporting the application

- a. **Matching funds.** A description of the matching funds the applicant will invest in the proposed project, if any. For each element, indicate the type of match (cash, salary expense, or in-kind contribution). If the application is submitted by a partnership, identify the partner responsible for providing each element of the proposed matching funds. *Note: The requirement for this information is satisfied via inclusion of the completed Funding Statement as page 4 of the application.*
- If available, provide documentation to support an offer of matching funds (minutes of a town board meeting, a letter from a prospective customer or local government official, etc.).

Tri-County will be providing matching funds in the amount of \$61,600 for the construction of the Pleasant Valley FTTH Project. In addition, the Town is committing a total of \$51,700 in matching funds to aid in the completion of the project. These dollars are coming from the ARPA funds that the town received through the American Rescue Plan Act. Eau Claire County is also committing a total of \$51,700 to this project from their ARPA funds. Detail of funds are shown in the Budget & Income Summary on page 4 of this application.

- b. **Public-private partnerships.** If the public-private partnership is memorialized in a joint venture agreement or other writing, provide a copy of that agreement. If the partnership has not been reduced to a written agreement, provide a short description of the management role, financial commitment, or other contribution to the project for each participating partner.
- In scoring this element, information regarding active engagement of diverse communities in the planning, permitting, or marketing of the project will be given weight as well.

Tri-County and the Town will enter into a partnership to build FTTH to those in the underserved/unserved project. Tri-County will manage the construction of the network, own, and maintain the network when complete. Tri-County and the Town will work together on planning of the construction to be prepared for future road projects and housing expansion. Tri-County will work with the Town on marketing and customer education so that all residents are taking advantage of the services and opportunities that FTTH broadband connection can provide. Tri-County also provides classes to customers and non-customers, called TCC-U, which educate about available services and their use with broadband. The University of Eau Claire also conducts a Digital Literacy Course for residents of Eau Claire County to promote broadband usage. Tri-County works with the University to promote this course. A resolution passed by the Town is included as an attachment to this application.

- c. **Existing broadband service.** A list of the broadband service providers, if any, currently serving the area the applicant proposes to serve. In scoring this element, the following factors will be taken into account:
- The degree to which the proposed project avoids duplicating existing broadband infrastructure.
  - The application of a wireless broadband service provider proposing significant overlap with existing broadband service in addition to service to an unserved area will not be given priority consideration.
  - Provide a list of all landline broadband service providers (DSL, cable or fiber to the home) and fixed wireless broadband service providers that overlap the footprint of the proposed broadband project.
  - If known, provide an estimate of the customers within the proposed footprint that are served by competing landline and fixed wireless broadband service providers, and the download/upload speeds offered by those competing service providers.
  - Provide a list of mobile wireless broadband service providers that overlap the footprint of the proposed project.
  - If known, provide an estimate of the customers within the proposed footprint that are served by competing mobile wireless broadband service providers, and the download/upload speeds offered by those competing service providers.

The existing broadband provider located within the Project area is CenturyLink/Lumen. Per the Wisconsin PSC Broadband Map, the highest speed shown available to the residents in the underserved project area is 100 mbps x 10 mbps. It is the belief of Tri-County and the Town that these speeds are not available to 100% of the locations in the underserved area, and are based on Census Blocks versus availability. The PSC Broadband map shows in the unserved areas of the project, CenturyLink/Lumen provides speeds of 10 mbps x 1 mbps, with some areas showing no broadband available. This service is provided through XDSL technology, which is a legacy technology that does not provide reliable broadband service. Because copper loops are used for XDSL technology these broadband speeds are significantly reduced as the length of the copper loop increases. The XDSL technology is also not scalable to the broadband speeds needed in the future, and cannot address the distance limitations it has. Tri-County's position, based on comments and letters of support from residents within the Project area, is that there is not a provider providing reliable broadband service of 25 Mbps down and 3 Mbps up in the Project area. This is also supported by the Town's commitment to partner with Tri-County, along with the County's contribution, to bring broadband to the underserved/unserved areas.

Current providers in the unserved areas of the Project.

**Wireline**

None

**Fixed Wireless**

United States Cellular Corporation 2 Mbps x .064 Mbps

Current underserved areas of the Project.

**Wireline**

CenturyLink XDSL 100 Mbps x 10 Mbps

**Fixed Wireless**

United States Cellular Corporation 2 Mbps x .064 Mbps

- d. **Project impact.** A description of the geographic area and the population, both in terms of absolute numbers and likely users, which will be served by the proposed project. Indicate the number of anticipated residential and business customers in the project area, if known. Explain the speed and quality of internet service that will be available. Include information about the range of packages available for purchase. Provide details on any low-income access programs and steps the project will take to support adoption.

The Town of Pleasant Valley resides in southern Eau Claire County. The Project covers 4 square miles of rural rolling hills and farmland. The project will bring last mile FTTH broadband to 25 underserved residential locations and 2 underserved businesses. The Town is located south of the City of Eau Claire. The Project area is an "island" that was created with RDOF. Tri-County currently provides service on the southern side of the project area. Charter/Spectrum is currently building FTTH service in awarded RFOF areas on the north side of the project area. The Town is a growing area for people looking to work in Eau Claire or telecommute and live in these rural areas. The Project area served by the school districts of Eleva-Strum, and Eau Claire. The University of Eau Claire and Chippewa Valley Technical College serve the residents and recent high school graduates with a chance to attend college and live at home. These students can benefit by having the connectivity required to do their schoolwork and connect with instructors at any time during the day. It is the Town and County's desire to have FTTH broadband connections to 100% of its residents. A survey on broadband satisfaction administered by Eau Claire County Broadband showed 64% of respondents in the project area were not satisfied with their broadband service. This grant will be a step in the right direction for the needs of today and tomorrow. Cooperation and commitments between the Town and the County with the assistance of the State Broadband Expansion Grant can make this a reality. To continue to draw people to live in these areas, reliable, affordable broadband is necessary. With this project, Tri-County will be able to provide reliable speeds at a minimum of 100 mbps x 100 mbps and up to 10 Gbps. Currently available broadband speeds and costs will be as follows.

100 Mbps x 100 Mbps \$49.95

250 Mbps x 250 Mbps \$69.95

500 Mbps x 500 Mbps \$99.95

1 Gbps 1 Gbps \$199.95

As an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier Tri-County provides discounts to resident customers for broadband service in accordance with Section PSC 160.062 Lifeline

Program of the Wisconsin Administrative Code and FCC regulations for Lifeline support. Tri-County works directly with all local school districts to identify students that are not connected to a broadband service, and determine if Tri-County has facilities at that student's home location to be provided at reasonable rates. Tri-County has registered with the Affordable Connectivity Program in an effort to provide broadband services to those that qualify for that program.

e. **Scalability.** A description of how the proposed project could expand or improve the broadband service it delivers, while maintaining the quality of its broadband service. This description should include specific projected increases in the following parameters that are known at the time of the application:

- The number of users.
- The number of network nodes.
- The number of services provided.
- The geographic area served by the project.
- The number of aggregation points in middle mile project.

This description may also include a discussion of possible growth potential that is outside the commitment the applicant is making as part of its application.

Tri-County currently provides broadband to served portions of the Town. We provide this with a 100% fiber to the home network. Tri-County can effectively build on existing network in place in our served area to expand broadband service to the Project area. Tri-County has enough middle mile capacity to provide the broadband services at speed levels that are required today, and well into the future. Along with broadband services, all residents of the Town would be able to have access to telephone and television services that Tri-County provides. Eau Claire County is working very hard with all communities to bring reliable broadband to 100% of its residents. This Project will be built to allow expansion in to adjacent areas at any time that funding and need would become available.

f. **Economic development.** A description of how the proposed project will promote job growth or retention, expand the property tax base or improve the overall economic vitality of the municipality or region. This description may be supplemented with a letter from one or more persons discussing the potential economic impact the project could have for that individual or business. In scoring this element, the following factors will be taken into account:

- A discussion of potential economic impact the project could have for an individual business located in the project area.
- An explanation of how an improved download and upload transmission speed could better support a specific business in the project area.
- An explanation of the likely impact improved broadband service could have on residential property values, supported by local sales data if available.
- A demonstration of how improved broadband service to a residential portion of the project could benefit a telecommuting population.

- **A demonstration of how the speeds and service being offered by the project fits with current and future economic needs of the community and local businesses.**

Broadband is a desired service for residential and businesses as they chose locations. The Town are served by three Wisconsin School Districts. Teachers and students alike that reside in the Town need reliable broadband. Education at the K-12 level, and on to the post-secondary schooling, have found a strong reliance on broadband to bring quality education opportunities. The ability to have access to quality, reliable broadband gives residents an opportunity to live, or buy homes in these areas. This continues to drive a strong real estate market that equates to more people living in the Town and providing a tax base that helps to maintain roads and other infrastructure in the town. The Town does lie in a desirable area for those that have the ability to telecommute for work. The area includes beautiful rolling hills for hiking, hunting, and other recreational opportunities. Providing reliable broadband is essential to all that choose to live in this area. Located in the project area are farms and telecommuters. There are residents that would like to work from home and like to start home based businesses. Without reliable broadband, these things cannot happen. New homes and home sales will rely on reliable broadband that FTTH can provide.

- g. Effect upon broadband service to adjacent areas. A description of whether the proposed project will or will not impair the ability of a broadband service provider or competing broadband service provider to extend broadband service to areas adjacent to the proposed project area.**

The Pleasant Valley FTTH Project proposed by Tri-County will have no impact on another provider's ability to provide service in adjacent areas to the Project area. The Project area is very rural and very costly to build, and will probably would never be built, without support of the Wisconsin Broadband Expansion Grant. The rolling hills and heavy timbered areas of much of the project area, limit the use of fixed wireless as a service that can provide to 100% of the project area, or adjacent areas.

### **3.2.5 Other information supporting the application**

- a. A description of applicant's history or experience constructing broadband communications facilities in the State and elsewhere.**
- **If applicable, an applicant must comment upon the status of all prior broadband expansion grant projects, including the type of broadband technology used, the facility route actually built or installed, the number of residential and business customers actually connected, and other relevant details of the prior project(s).**
  - **An applicant may also comment on broadband construction projects undertaken in prior years that were not funded in part by the Broadband Expansion Grant program.**

Tri-County Communications has been providing telecommunications service in its designated ILEC territory since 1964. In 1996 Tri-County started offering internet services. In 2006 Tri-County merged with Western Wisconsin Communications Cooperative, the only Cable TV cooperative in the nation, and the first in the world to provide a distance learning solution that served 7 local school districts. In 2008 Tri-County started a FTTH project to roughly 4000 residences and businesses in its ILEC territories. This project was funded in part with a \$17 million Rural Utilities Service loan and was completed in 2014. It is now serving all residents with a minimum speed of 100 Mbps x 100 Mbps, with speeds up to 1 Gbps available. Tri-County has also been working since 2006 to replace the coaxial service outside the ILEC areas to a FTTH network. Over the last 14 years, Tri-County has invested in excess of \$30 million in broadband upgrades to our members. Tri-County is in a strong financial position and has reserves in excess of \$6,000,000 to help pay for the costs of the Project.

In 2014, Tri-County was recognized at the National level as a Smart Rural Community by NTCA – the Rural Broadband Association – for our ongoing efforts to improve the data network and overall technology culture in our area. Tri-County has also received the “GIG Certified” designation by NTCA, which certifies that the Tri-County network is capable of speeds up to 1 Gigabit per second (Gbps).

In 2021, Tri-County was awarded two Wisconsin Broadband Expansion Grants. The Town of Drammen FTTH project was a partnership with the Town of Drammen, and brought service to 162 unserved/underserved locations in the town. Construction of this project completed in early February of 2022. Currently, approximately 80 of the locations have been connected, with the remainder to be completed through 2022. Tri-County was also awarded a grant in 2021 for Newcomb Valley FTTH outside of the City of Arcadia. This project is 90% complete and installation of services to customers is planned to start in March of 2022.

In 2021, Tri-County was awarded two ARPA Broadband Expansion grants. The Town of Naples FTTH in Buffalo County and the Town of Alma FTTH in Jackson County are scheduled to start in the spring and summer of 2021. Combined, these projects will provide reliable FTTH broadband to 518 locations.

**b. A description of how the proposed project will or will not duplicate existing broadband infrastructure.**

The Town of Pleasant Valley FTTH project will not duplicate existing broadband service in the Project area. It is Tri-County and the Town position that reliable broadband connections that meet the requirement of 25 mbps x 3 mbps are not available to all of the residents and businesses in the project area. The Project area was not included in the RDOF funding that is building services to the north of the project. Tri-County services customers with FTTH to the south of the Project area. Without grant funding the Project area could very well be the only part of the town without adequate broadband.



- c. **A description of an applicant's financial ability to undertake the proposed broadband construction project.**

**This may include information such as the number of years the company has been in operation, documentation of successful completion of similar infrastructure projects, evidence that sufficient funds are available to cover project expenditure and match, customer turn-over rates, and credit rating.**

In Section 3.2.5 (a) above we detailed the history of Tri-County Communications and documented successful completion of similar infrastructure projects. Tri-County is in a strong financial position and has reserves in excess of \$6,000,000 to help pay for the costs of the Project. Tri-County has seen an increase in membership of 11% over the last two years with an 86% take rate of our broadband services. Tri-County was able to pay off its \$17 million RUS loan for the ILEC FTTH build in 2020, and currently has no debt.

- d. **This is not a middle mile project.**

- e. **This is not a middle mile project.**

- f. **A description of how the proposed project will affect the ability of individuals to access health care service from home, including any impact upon the costs of those services.**

- **Specific information from a hospital or clinic in the project area that currently uses or intends to use home-based telemedicine equipment to enhance access health care service would best illustrate this point.**

The proposed project will provide that reliable broadband connection that residents need for the future of home healthcare. With reliable broadband to a home, a resident can have access to virtual meetings with care providers. This can eliminate the need for patients to make those visits to clinics and hospitals. Monitoring of health conditions like blood pressure, diabetes, and oxygen levels can be done remotely, and in real time to possibly offer lifesaving opportunities. These great technologies can help residents stay in their homes longer as they age, and give their loved ones the comfort of knowing they are cared for. As stated in one letter of support, the lack of broadband has caused "problems uploading pacemaker data" and "zoom medical appointments can be a headache".

National studies provide evidence of cost savings with the use of telehealth services. In a pre-COVID-19 study of 40,000 Cigna beneficiaries, the 20,000 beneficiaries who used the MDLive telehealth platform had 17% lower costs when compared with non-virtual care. Virtual care users also experienced a 36% net reduction in ED use per 1,000 people compared to non-virtual care users ([Healthcare IT News](#)). The National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) [Report of the Taskforce on Telehealth Policy](#) discusses a variety of evidence that the use of telehealth services lowers the overall cost of care. We are confident that this national data can be extrapolated to this project area.

- g. A description of how the proposed project will affect the ability of students to access educational opportunities from home.**
- **Specific information on the likely number of students that will benefit from improved access to educational opportunities from home would be useful.**
  - **Specific information regarding educational programs that are currently available for students in the project area would be useful.**

The Project area within the Town are parts of Elewa-Strum, and Eau Claire School Districts. It is not known how many students will benefit at this time. As shared in the letter of support from the Superintendent of the Elewa-Strum School District, “efforts to provide remote learning to students in our district were hampered”, due to lack of broadband access. Schools are looking to develop programs that can be delivered virtually to students. This makes it important that every location have access to reliable, affordable broadband.

The University of Eau Claire and the Chippewa Valley Technical College serve the area of the Town very well. As students graduate from high school and choose to move on to secondary schooling, many chose to stay in the area because they can stay at home and save money. Having access to a strong and reliable broadband connection provides them to be able to do class work while in the comfort of their own home.

- h. A description of actions taken by a city, village, town, or county in support of the grant application that have not been discussed in the context of a public-private partnership above, including but not limited to:**
- **The contribution of funds, easements or permissions to use publicly-owned real estate, construction materials, or other items of value to the grant project.**
  - **The contribution of in-kind assistance to the grant project in the form of waived fees and expenses for obtaining use permits and permissions.**
  - **The contribution of other items of benefit to the grant project, such as public outreach and education, vehicles, water, etc.**
  - **Certification as a Broadband Forward! Community or Telecommuter Forward! Community.**

The Town of Pleasant Valley is a Telecommuter Forward! Community. The County of Eau Claire is a Broadband Forward! Community. Resolutions from both Town and the County are included in the attachments. The County and the Town have worked with broadband utilities on permitting to help with the construction process. Fees have been lowered and/or waived to ease in the process and cost.

- i. Letters and messages in support of the application submitted by prospective customers, local government officials, and other interested persons**

Letters of support are included in the attachments portion of the Application.

- j. **Any other equitable factor that the applicant desires to discuss, including one or more of the factors in Wis. Stat. § 196.03(6) that the applicant believes its project would advance. In discussing this element, the following information may be useful:**
- **Technical support and training materials that the applicant intends to provide.**
  - **Information that the applicant intends to use to promote better broadband adoption and use.**
  - **A description of a program or outreach to provide assistance to individuals of low income.**

Tri-County provides various programs and outreach to provide assistance to individuals of low income, including the following:

- As an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier Tri-County provides discounts to resident customers for broadband service in accordance with Section PSC 160.062 Lifeline Program of the Wisconsin Administrative Code and FCC regulations for Lifeline support.
- Tri-County also works directly with all local school districts to identify students that are not connected to a broadband service and determine if Tri-County has facilities at that student's home location.

With the increased use of technology for daily activities and the movement by many businesses and schools to operating remotely during the pandemic, broadband has become even more critical for people across the country to carry out their daily lives. Tri-County's minimum internet speed is 100 Mbps symmetrical. Tri-County's all fiber optic infrastructure will sufficiently meet household needs, including the ability to support the simultaneous use of work, education, and health applications, and also sufficiently meet increasing household demands for bandwidth.

Information that Tri-County intends to use to promote better broadband adoption and use. We complete premise visits to every address to discuss Fiber-to-the-Home (FTTH) with all of our grant projects. We provide the new customers with a packet of information, including the stages of building our all-fiber optic network to them. At that time, customers sign our permission slips to bury fiber optics on their property, and more often than not, customers select the services bundle they want to have installed. There is no need to lock the customers into any contract; we know bringing a future proof all-fiber network is mission critical. Our mindset is to build it once and to build it right.

Tri-County realizes the importance of the services we provide to those in our communities. As a Cooperative, we have a responsibility to our members to provide these services at the lowest cost and to work with all current and prospective members on the best way to use these services. Tri-County provides information on how to enroll programs for low-income individuals through Lifeline Support and the Affordable Connectivity Program. Tri-County also provides educational opportunities through our TCC-U Classes along with educational and instructional videos on internet use.

**Affordable Connectivity Program confirmation**

Welcome to the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). Your election to participate is complete. You have been assigned the following Study Area Code(s) (SAC) for the ACP:

Provider Name/Affiliate Name	SPIN*	Study Area Code	State
Tri-County Communications Cooperative, Inc.	143001845	833101	WI
Tri-West Communications	200000806	833102	WI

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**Tri County Broadband Partnership  
RESOLUTION NO. 22-16-07 (amended 22-16-05)  
Town of Pleasant Valley  
Eau Claire County**

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The Town of Pleasant Valley, a Wisconsin Municipality, acting pursuant to its authority under Wisconsin Statutes, hereby consents to the following resolutions, with said consent to have the same force and effect as a unanimous vote thereon:

**WHEREAS**, Tri-County Communications Cooperative, Inc., desires to commence a project consisting of the construction and operation of fiber optic communications services to provide the most advanced infrastructure to unserved and underserved residents of the Town of Pleasant Valley;

**WHEREAS**, The Town of Pleasant Valley, in recognition of the broadband underserved areas of its community, seeks to enter into a quasi-public/private venture to obtain, maintain and increase broadband coverage for the support of education, health care, growth of business, retention of existing business, tourism promotion, and overall economic vitality and sustainability;

**WHEREAS**, The Town of Pleasant Valley desires to pursue a Broadband Expansion Grant offered by and through the State of Wisconsin Public Service Commission;

**WHEREAS**, Tri-County Communications Cooperative, Inc. is willing and able to partner with The Town of Pleasant Valley to provide the latest advancements in broadband coverage and to seek all available grants to provide and subsidize the cost of necessary broadband infrastructure; and

**WHEREAS**, The Town of Pleasant Valley desires to pursue and make application for any and all grant money available for broadband coverage with the assistance of Tri-County Communications Cooperative, Inc.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, be it resolved by the undersigned as follows:

**RESOLVED**, that The Town of Pleasant Valley authorizes the application to the State of Wisconsin Public Service for a Broadband Expansion Grant in partnership with Tri-County Communications Cooperative, Inc.; and

**RESOLVED FURTHER**, that The Town of Pleasant Valley, subject to additional negotiations and approvals, will enter into a Development Agreement by and between Tri-County Communications Cooperative, Inc.; and

**RESOLVED FURTHER**, that The Town of Pleasant Valley, will, upon approval of the grant application by the Public Service Commission and execution of the Development Agreement, provide matching funds in the amount of \$103,400 (\$51,700 from Pleasant Valley and \$51,700 from Eau Claire County); and

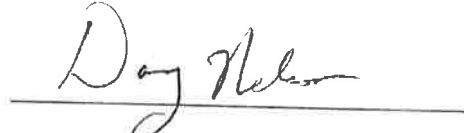
**RESOLVED FURTHER**, that the duly appointed Town of Pleasant Valley representative is authorized to do all such acts and to execute, acknowledge and deliver all such documents as he or she may be authorized by the Pleasant Valley Town Board to be necessary or desirable in order to carry out and comply with the terms and provisions of these resolutions, and all of the acts of The Town of Pleasant Valley which are in conformity with the intent and purposes of these resolutions, whether previously or subsequently taken or done, are in all respects ratified, approved and confirmed; and

**RESOLVED FURTHER**, that all prior acts of The Town of Pleasant Valley in furtherance of the transactions contemplated by the within resolutions be and are hereby approved; and

**RESOLVED FURTHER**, that all prior resolutions of the undersigned or any parts thereof in conflict with any or all of the foregoing resolutions are repealed to the extent of such conflict.

Dated: February 23, 2022

 Chairman

 Supervisor

 Supervisor

By:  Clerk



S10414 Cty Rd HHI, Eleva, WI 54738  
715-878-4645 • townofpleasantvalley@gmail.com  
www.townofpleasantvalley.com

February 14, 2022

Stephanie Powell Coker  
Secretary to the Commission  
Public Service Commission  
4822 Madison Yards Way  
North Tower 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Madison, WI 53705-9100

RE: Town of Pleasant Valley Broadband Expansion Grant – Tri-County  
Communications

Dear Commission Members,

The Town of Pleasant Valley has received ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act of 2021) funds from the federal government. In collaboration with Eau Claire County, Charter Communications and Tri- County Communications, the Town Board has decided to pursue expanding highspeed broadband internet coverage to the entire Town. Eau Claire County has committed to match our ARPA dollars if the funds are spent on broadband expansion. Charter and TCC already have coverage within areas of the Town and the remainder of the Town is covered by Centurytel.

Recent speed tests have proven most of the Centurytel coverage in Pleasant Valley is considered underserved. With our recent speed test results, the residents served by Centurytel have proven the current maps indicating existing high-speed internet service via census blocks contains numerous inaccuracies. The Town recently requested letters of support from the residents and home-based businesses in the underserved areas and the response was overwhelmingly supportive.

Both Charter Communications and Tri-County Communications have been very cooperative with communications, have agreed not to duplicate services in any areas which will receive the funding and are applying for Broadband Expansion Grants on our behalf through the Public Service Commission.

The goal of the Town of Pleasant Valley is to work for the betterment of our area and facilitate economic stability and growth. Technology and especially access to high-speed internet has long been a catalyst to driving economic diversity and stability. In today's business climate, access to high-speed transmissions are critical tools for business and residents. The ability for our area to offer high speed internet is critical to our residents and essential for education, industry, public safety, telemedicine and entertainment. Via resolution, Pleasant Valley became a Telecommuter Forward

Certified community in November of 2019.

The Broadband Expansion Project Tri-County Communications is proposing in the Town of Pleasant Valley, Eau Claire County is of great interest to us. Without access to highspeed internet, our development will continue to be hampered by our limited broadband speeds. We have numerous residents who are anxious to join the rest of the world in the 21st century with competitive broadband speeds.

Please accept this letter of support from the Town Board of Pleasant Valley for Tri-County Communications Broadband Grant application. In our view the project is a good fit for the State of Wisconsin's Broadband Expansion Grant, and is a project we highly recommend and support.

Please feel free to contact Clerk/Treasurer Jen Meyer at [townofpleasantvalley@gmail.com](mailto:townofpleasantvalley@gmail.com) or 715-878-4645 with any questions.

Sincerely,  
Town of Pleasant Valley Board

  
Dan Hanson, Chairman  
Doug Nelson, Supervisor  
Dan Green, Supervisor



## SCHOOL DISTRICT OF ELEVA-STRUM

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**Mr. Cory Kulig**

Superintendent of Schools  
kuligc@esschools.k12.wi.us

Mr. Joshua Skoug  
Middle/High School Principal  
skougj@esschools.k12.wi.us

Mr. Marty Kempf  
Elementary Principal  
kempfm@esschools.k12.wi.us

2/7/2022

Steffany Powell Coker  
Secretary to the Commission  
Public Service Commission  
4822 Madison Yards Way  
North Tower 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Madison, WI 53705-9100

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of the Town of Pleasant Valley and their work to improve the technology and access to high-speed internet in our area. This work will have a profound impact in helping to stimulate economic growth and provide the stability for those seeking quality technology access in a rural setting.

Broadband access inequities became widely known following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our efforts to provide remote learning to the students in our district were hampered by this access and made our efforts much more challenging.

I am excited for the work that is ahead and look forward to making improvements in access for everyone.

Sincerely,

Cory Kulig, Superintendent

W23597 US Highway 10, Strum, WI 54770-8609  
(715) 695-2696 Fax: (715) 695-3519  
An Equal Opportunity Employer



# Warren Petryk

State Representative • 93rd Assembly District

February 3rd, 2022

Steffany Powell Coker  
Secretary to the Commission  
Public Serve Commission  
4822 Madison Yards Way  
North Tower 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Madison, WI 53705-9100

**RE: Town of Pleasant Valley Broadband Grant**

Dear Commission Members,

I write to you today to express my support for the Town of Pleasant Valley receiving the PSC Broadband Expansion Grant.

Increasing broadband access in the Town of Pleasant Valley would enable community members to access much needed services such as telehealth and virtual school, as well as maintain relationships with friends and family members during the COVID-19 pandemic. This important project will also maximize Western Wisconsin's potential to have a flourishing economy.

I ask you to please consider and approve the Town of Pleasant Valley Broadband Expansion Grant which will support economic development and foster increased access to improve the lives of the citizens of the township.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions for me, please feel free to contact me in my office at (608) 266-0660.

Sincerely,

Warren Petryk  
State Representative  
93<sup>rd</sup> Assembly District



# JEFF SMITH

WISCONSIN STATE SENATOR – 31<sup>ST</sup> DISTRICT



March 10, 2022

Steffany Powell Coker, Secretary to the Commission  
North Tower, 6th Floor  
4822 Madison Yards Way  
Madison, WI 53705

Dear Review Panel Members,

As you consider applications for the 2022 grant cycle of the Broadband Expansion Grant Program, I urge you to consider supporting the Town of Pleasant Valley's broadband expansion project. I am encouraged to see collaboration among the Town of Pleasant Valley, Eau Claire County, Tri-County Communications, and Charter Communications on this project to expand high-speed internet in a rapidly growing area of our state. This project for your consideration will have a positive impact on Eau Claire County and western Wisconsin as a whole.

Tri-County Communications has served western Wisconsin for years now, helping to increase broadband access for unserved and underserved areas throughout western Wisconsin. According to a report by *Forward Analytics*, Eau Claire County ranks 56 out of 72 counties in rural broadband access. The need for broadband expansion is evident in Eau Claire County, and Tri-County Communications has a commendable track record of expanding broadband to rural areas in Wisconsin.

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted just how important broadband access is for our communities to thrive and for residents to stay connected. This collaborative project aims to expand high-speed broadband internet to the entire Town of Pleasant Valley, a rapidly growing area. Internet is no longer a luxury— it's a necessity. This project's success will create more opportunity for our community by helping our students and businesses access high-speed internet.

I am proud to represent Wisconsin's 31st Senate District, and I am committed to the betterment of Wisconsin as a whole. Tri-County Communications has shown a clear and consistent commitment to help our communities receive the broadband services they need, which is why I recommend the approval of this grant application.

Sincerely,

JEFF SMITH  
State Senator  
31<sup>ST</sup> Senate District

Town of Pleasant Valley  
Eau Claire County  
Wisconsin

Resolution No. 19-16-20  
In support of Telecommuting Opportunities  
And  
Telecommuter Forward! Certification

WHEREAS, the Town of Pleasant Valley supports and commits to promote the availability of telecommuting options; and,

WHEREAS, the Town of Pleasant Valley hereby appoints the Town Chair as the single point of contact for coordinating telecommuting opportunities within the Town of Pleasant Valley including the following responsibilities:


1. Coordination and partnership with broadband providers, realtors, economic development professionals, employers, employees, and other telecommuting stakeholders.
2. Collaboration with broadband providers and employers to identify, develop, and market telecommuter-capable broadband packages.
3. Communication and partnership with broadband providers and economic development professionals to develop common goals.
4. Promotion of telecommuter-friendly workspaces, such as business incubators with telecommuting spaces, if such a workspace has been established in the political subdivision at the time the political subdivisions adopts the resolution.
5. Familiarity with broadband mapping tools and other state-level resources.
6. Maintaining regular communication with the state broadband office.
7. Making regular reports to the Town Board of the Town of Pleasant Valley.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY PROCLAIMED that the Town of Pleasant Valley supports telecommuting opportunities for Eau Claire County in its application for Telecommuter Forward! Community certification.

Adopted this 11<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2019

Town of Pleasant Valley

  
Chairman

  
Attest - Clerk



**Eau Claire County  
BROADBAND COMMITTEE**  
Eau Claire County Courthouse - Room 3344  
721 Oxford Avenue  
Eau Claire, Wisconsin 54703-5212  
(715) 839-4741

March 3, 2022

Steffany Powell Coker  
Secretary to the Commission  
Public Service Commission of Wisconsin  
4822 Madison Yards Way  
North Tower- 6th Floor  
Madison, Wisconsin 53705-9100

RE: Tri-County Communications Cooperative, Inc. - Wisconsin Public Service Commission Broadband Expansion Grant Application – Town of Pleasant Valley

Dear Ms. Powell Coker:

The Eau Claire County Broadband Committee strongly supports the proposed Tri-County Communications Cooperative, Inc. (TCC) project that will provide fiber to the premises of 27 locations that are unserved/underserved in the Eau Claire County Town of Pleasant Valley. With this project, all residents and businesses in the Town of Pleasant Valley will have access to high-speed broadband internet service. The proposed project is a public-private partnership between TCC and the Town of Pleasant Valley. The Town of Pleasant Valley is committing \$51,700 of its American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to this project and Eau Claire County will match that amount if their grant application is approved.

In our digital age, inadequate broadband infrastructure disproportionately affects small, rural communities. Poor broadband infrastructure limits the ability of residents to take advantage of virtual learning opportunities, to work remotely, and to access telehealth options. Poor broadband infrastructure puts rural communities at a competitive disadvantage and is a major roadblock to economic development compared to communities with high-speed broadband services. Local businesses are losing opportunities because of poor Internet connections. The fact of the matter is, that in our connected economy, access to a high-speed broadband Internet connection is an absolute necessity.

Eau Claire County is committed to expanding broadband infrastructure throughout the County. In 2019, the Eau Claire County Broadband Committee was formed. Made up of eleven members with varied broadband expertise and backgrounds, they have been working to build strong relationships with Internet Service Providers (ISPs), Townships, and other partners to expand broadband access, especially in rural areas. What follows are some of the Committee's accomplishments toward that goal:

- Advocate for the expansion of broadband infrastructure access to residences and businesses
- Strong supporter of the town and internet service provider partnerships
- Recipient of the PSC Broadband Forward Community designation
- Supported towns to be designated as Broadband Telecommuter Communities
- Developed an online broadband survey with a speed test to collect more accurate data for use in grant applications
- Committed to provide a financial match for successful PSC Broadband Expansion Grant applications
- Partnered with UW-Eau Claire to develop a Digital Navigator program
- Partnering with United Way of the Greater Chippewa Valley to develop a Digital Equity & Inclusion program
  - NOTE: These last two would be available to Town of Pleasant Valley residents and businesses to increase adoption and improve technical skills.

As the Chair of the Eau Claire County Broadband Committee, I urge you to approve the grant proposal to expand broadband access in the Town of Pleasant Valley. Enhanced broadband services will give residents the ability to stay connected, enable them to take advantage of virtual learning opportunities, enable them to work remotely, and enable them to access telehealth options. It will also give businesses the ability to take advantage of economic development opportunities they cannot take advantage of now.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Donald Mowry, Chair  
Eau Claire County Broadband Committee



February 24, 2022

Steffany Powell Coker  
Secretary to the Commission  
Public Service Commission  
4822 Madison Yards Way  
North Tower 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Madison, WI 53705-9100

Dear Steffany Powell Coker:

The Chippewa Valley Technical College (CVTC) is in support of the Town of Pleasant Valley's grant application through the Wisconsin Broadband Expansion Grant program. This grant application supports the Chippewa Valley Technical College's mission:

*CVTC delivers innovative, applied, and flexible education that supports a diverse community of learners, improves the lives of students, and adds value to our communities.*

Faster and more reliable broadband for CVTC District residents will provide more opportunities for CVTC stakeholders to enroll in the desired educational opportunities available from CVTC. These opportunities include the CVTC Learning Management Systems, On-line courses, Hybrid courses, Business and Industry training and course work for High School students. In order for CVTC to be able to deliver programming to district residents, fast and reliable broadband is necessary.

CVTC supports the Wisconsin Broadband Expansion Grant program which in turn will provide opportunities for residents and businesses within the CVTC District. CVTC supports this grant application and hopes that the grant request that is being brought forward by the Town of Pleasant Valley is approved.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to Thomas Lange, Chief Information Officer of CVTC at 715-831-7285.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Thomas Lange'.

Thomas Lange

Vice President of Information Technology and Chief Information Officer  
Chippewa Valley Technical College  
[Tlange8@cvtc.edu](mailto:Tlange8@cvtc.edu)  
715-831-7285

Eau Claire Campuses

Clairemont  
West  
Gateway

620 W. Clairemont Ave.  
Eau Claire, WI 54701-6162  
715-833-6200  
Fax 715-833-6470  
[www.cvtc.edu](http://www.cvtc.edu)

An affirmative action  
employer and educational  
institution.

Bruce A. Barker  
President

January 20, 2022

Watford and Marilyn Seguin  
S13503 County Road I  
Eleva, WI 54738

To Whom it May Concern:

In response to the town letter regarding our broadband internet coverage, it is as follows.

Current provider – Centurytel

Uses – telemedicine, banking and other personal uses

Problems/hardships –

problems uploading pacemaker data

zoom medical appointments can be a headache

online banking is slow at times

Highspeed internet service would improve all of the above.

We just tested our speed at the site in the letter. Here are the results.

9.94 Mb/s Download

0.71 Mb/s Upload

Latency 2.8 ms

Retransmission 0.00%

Thanks for pursuing highspeed internet service for the underserved.

Sincerely

Watford and Marilyn Seguin

Handwritten letters received from:

James and Brenda McMahon, S13190 State Rd 93, Eleva, WI 54738

James Warden, S13500 State Rd 93, Eleva, WI 54738

Hardcopy of each letter is on file with the Town of Pleasant Valley clerk

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To Whom it may concern:

We reside at S13190 State Road 93, Eleva, WI 54738. We currently rent where we live but are very much in support of the broadband expansion.

Currently we have no service. We just use data on our phones or wait until we go somewhere with WIFI. We can also go to our children's home to use a computer if necessary! Also, our phones have spotty service. If we had broadband, I would be able to apply for jobs that work from home, make doctor appointments, order meds, have zoom meetings and see our grandchild that lives out of the area. It would open a new world up for us.

As renters our input may not weigh as much as a permanent resident. We have lived here for 8 years and plan to continue.

Thank you,  
James and Brenda McMahon

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Our current internet provide is ViaSat dish at the cost of \$170.00 per month. We are on CenturyLink land line; they do not offer internet service here. We rely on internet for many things, we cannot get cell phone service here, so if the landline is out, we can use internet.

It would be great to get internet at a more reasonable price.

We would use a more reasonable priced service, would also be nice to get cell phone service. I feel like we are in the middle of no man's land.

Thanks for the chance of input.

James Warden

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January 23, 2022

Mark and Kathleen Gehrke  
S13790 County Road I  
Eleva, WI 54738

To Whom it May Concern:

In response to the town letter regarding our broadband internet coverage, it is as follows.

Current provider – Centurytel

Uses – teaching virtually, virtual community committee meetings, banking, television signal, and other personal uses.

Problems/hardships

- During Zoom, Google, and WebEx meetings image and sound freeze or connection cuts out and is lost.
- Downloading large files for work can be a headache.
- Long buffering times or disconnection while streaming programs.
- When the whole family is home, very slow speed when multiple devices are connecting to and using the internet.

Highspeed internet service would improve all of the above.

We just tested our speed at the site in the letter. Here are the results.

7.83 Mb/s Download

0.50 Mb/s Upload

Latency 27 ms

Retransmission 0.00%

We typically use Google Chrome as our web browser and the test would not run on that. The test was run on Firefox, a secondary browser that we use.

Thank you for pursuing high-speed internet service for the underserved.

Sincerely

Mark and Kathleen Gehrke

To Whom it May Concern:

I live at S14111 County Road I in the southern part of Eau Claire county in the town of Pleasant Valley. The Internet speeds that we get here are 10 mb/s download and 2.57 mb/s upload. Because of this we have been purchasing our internet service from a satellite internet provider. We are currently paying over \$100 dollars a month for service. We run a large farming operation and we use the internet constantly to communicate with suppliers and vendors. We also use the internet to check the weather and the prices of the equipment and supplies we need to run our operation. We also use the internet to do personal business such as communicating with doctors and ordering our prescriptions, and banking. At the end of the day it is also nice to relax on the couch and watch a movie on the many streaming services that are available.

Signed, Lee Seguin

**Comments from Pleasant Valley residents submitted through Eau Claire County Internet Satisfaction survey.**

Our numbers are zero.zero because we have no wifi because of where we live in Pleasant Valley. No cable--too far from town. Satellite is too expensive. Cellular service is poor because we live in a rural valley.

**SOME PROBLEMS UPLOADING DATA FROM PACEMAKER**

It's been so frustrating to be a part of all things virtual including business related activity, consumer products and services, and communication within a "mobile hotspot", 30 GB highspeed internet per month. We watch cable being laid less than a mile from our house, serving fewer homes than are on our road. We can't be a part of media offerings (e.g. streaming video) within our current internet availability. No one seems to care.

Wish we had fiber

This is way too slow for online meetings and virtual classes especially with multiple kids/ adults using it concurrently

Help us!!!!

I have satellite. The download speed varies from 15 Mbps to as low as 0.100 Mbps in as little as 5 seconds, with a latency of 600 ms, which is a serious problem since we must use the internet for our phone calls (we have virtually no cell signal at our house) and also as Treasurer of First Presbyterian church. This causes dead time and disconnects on both Zoom and phone calls and precludes any streaming. Fiber optic has been installed within one mile of our home but no one is willing to expand the coverage. Please help.

This location, like any other needs high speed internet to function in the modern world. Here we are limited to antiquated copper lines from a provider that charges a monthly fee based on their max speed of 6MPS.

The reality however is very rarely do we achieve 6mps. The norm is more like 2.6 - 3.2 mps download, or non functional at all.

Speed test vary greatly throughout the day. Often there is zero internet connection. We can only get Century Link at our residence and business location ( business is located across our residence street address ). Century Link claims we get 10 MB/s and that is what we pay for. Please help get better internet service here.

I tried teaching from home all last year and couldn't maintain connection.

This required driving into UWEC in order to teach (which was in middle of pandemic and frowned on).

PLEASE give us faster broadband.

Internet is not provided at this address. Hughesnet can provide 10MB

Our internet is now DSL, but it is still spotty and slow. It would be great to have access to broadband. Thanks!

The slow internet speed makes working from home difficult. I work for UWEC and teach online classes. Uploading content for students is very slow and fails often when uploading large files. Faster internet speeds would greatly facilitate my ability to teach online classes from home. I also have a child taking online classes and she would greatly benefit from faster internet speeds as well.

Slow internet has made all of the work/school from home over the past 2 years very challenging. We have 2 adults & 3 school age children at home, all trying to use the internet for everything from work, to school, to leisure!

The download speed of 2.52 is actually higher than it usually is. More often the speed is around 1.5. We pay for 3.0 but never reach that speed

Our daughter failed her AP Stats test because she could not upload her answers in the time allotted. Something has to be done. Please.

The lack of high speed internet has cost me a significant amount of revenue as I am unable to scale my processes and service to my clients. Not to mention the lost productivity. My online business has suffered immeasurably.

Slow, unable to use in parts of our house, mostly unable to run multiple devices on our WiFi at one time.

The lack of quality internet makes everything harder that relies on good internet access. Trying to make our business successful, accessing healthcare during the pandemic via telemedicine, furthering our education, or any sort of internet based entertainment proves difficult. We would be ecstatic if any progress from any provider was made to get us actual high speed internet instead of the DSL line we currently struggle with.

The service is just not reliable.

No internet is available at this address

I am unable to work from home with the current internet speed. I called my provider and they told me to move.

We live about 5 miles away from Eleva, so our concern is whether we would be considered for fiber in the foreseen future. Viasat's speeds vary so wildly that it's impossible to stream during peak hours, and the majority of the time the download speeds become 400 kbps.

We only had cellular telephone "Hot Spot" internet service until the C-19 lockdowns. We then had a VIASAT satellite system installed. Still not the best but better than cellular. System shuts down during heavy rain and snowfall. Cost of service is \$150/month kind of high... but better then nothing. Service is needed for both business and personal use. We could really use fiber lines for both broadband and telephone.

# **Eau Claire Energy Cooperative**

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Your Touchstone Energy® Partner



January 31, 2022

Lynn Thompson, President and CEO  
Eau Claire Energy Cooperative  
8214 U.S. Hwy 12  
Fall Creek WI 54742

Stephany Powell Coker  
Secretary to the Commission  
Public Service Commission of Wisconsin  
4822 Madison Yards Way  
North Tower – 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Madison, WI 53705-9100

**Re: Letter of support for TCC grant application – Town of Pleasant Valley and Town of Clear Creek**

Ms. Coker:

Eau Claire Energy Cooperative (ECEC) provides this letter of support for the Town of Pleasant Valley and Town of Clear Creek Broadband grant application.

ECEC is enthusiastically supporting this grant application. We have a history of working with TCC on other projects in our area. They will provide excellent broadband services to the underserved residents of these two townships. The residents in this area deserve access to the same connectivity that their urban neighbors enjoy.

Please feel free to contact me if you require any additional information.

Sincerely,

Lynn Thompson  
President/CEO

